



Practice Based Research Networks

***When we try to pick out
anything by itself, we
find it hitched to
everything else in the
universe --John Muir***

LTC Jeff Yarvis, Ph.D., MSW, M.Ed. Assistant Professor

(301) 295-9853 jyarvis@usuhs.mil

PEARL Research Coor



A Practice-Based Research Network (PBRN) Is...

- A collaborative of at least 4 practices working together to study issues of importance to primary care practice.
- And hey all have representative governance structure that exists beyond the needs of a dingle study.
- They have membership in the Federation of Practice-Based Research Networks (<http://www.aafp.org>)
- Connection with USUHS as training site and research institution
 - Access to grant funding mechanisms
 - Own IRB to streamline approvals
 - Opportunities for research by
 - Medical Students
 - FP Residents
 - Faculty



Challenge of Primary Care Research

- Patients present with multiple problems
- Presenting problems imbedded in context
 - Occupation or unemployment
 - Family and social connections
 - Life events and stages
- Primary care providers use multiple interventions
 - Drugs --Education
 - Surgical procedures --Diet
 - Exercise --Counseling
 - Community services referral --Reassurance
 - Watchful waiting



Limits of Traditional Clinical Research

- Most clinical research is reductionistic
 - Isolates single disease or disease processes
 - Location in tertiary medical centers creates selection bias
- Disease is studied in highly selected patients
- Designed to evaluate single interventions
- Focus on quantitative outcomes
 - Measurable physical outcomes, survival time
- Rarely looks at outcomes of primary care
 - Relief of suffering
 - Preservation or restoration of function
 - Sense of being understood and listened to



Practice Network

Characteristics

- Focus on primary care research in community based populations
- Provide access to the care practiced by full time primary care clinicians
- Practice-relevant research questions
- Systemic involvement of network's clinicians



Primary Care Research Needs

- Gain access to relevant health care phenomena of primary care
- Identify practice-relevant research questions
- Develop capacity for conducting research
 - Integrates practice wisdom of care providers
 - Uses rigorous multi-method research approach



Areas Researched by PBRN's

- Use of Anti-Biotics
- Use of Electronic Medical Records
- Vasectomy Reversal
- Toe Fungus
- Secondary Trauma, PTSD, & Allostatic Load
- Smoking Cessation
- Electronic Medical Records
- Childhood Obesity
- Injury Prevention
- Using a Primary Care Research Network (PBRN) for Distributed Faculty Development Program
- Eating Disorders



Types of PBRN's

- Affiliated with University
 - Affiliated with Federal Organization
 - Non-Profit Organization
-
- Each has Pros and Cons



Advantages of Practice Based Research Networks

- Access to practice-based issues not usually approached by biomedical researchers
- Low-cost/low burden studies
- Population Power
 - ASPN covers 72 practices in 32 states and 4 provinces comprised of 343 clinicians and 350,000 patients seen in 800,000 visits per year
 - PEARL has 189,000 Registered beneficiaries
- Standing network has capacity for multiple studies
 - Both consecutive and concurrent studies
 - Individual practices pick which studies they want to participate in
- Short feedback loop to translate findings into practice improvement



Limitations of Practice Based Research Networks

- Completeness and accuracy of reporting
- Generalizability:
 - how representative is the network's patient population to the larger US population?
 - How representative are the network's practitioners of national practitioner traits?



Advantages of PEARL

- Structure of military medicine supports collection of data across multiple sites
- Unique demographics and military specific problem areas
- Emerging concerns of combat injuries, DNBI's, and deployment issues



PBRN Membership Benefits

- Access to listsev
- CTSA and scholarships
- Peer learning collaboration
- 42 Family Med PBRNs



PEARL Membership

- Encourages Communication & Collaboration
- Develops Scientist-Practitioners
- Promotes Sharing Research
- Promotes Best Practices
- Support Advancement of Clinical Research in Practice-Based Settings
- ID Critical Needs
- Access Impact of Research
- Website



Vision

- Improve Research Methodology
- Training, OPD, ACGME
- Data Management
- Novel uses of and study of IT
- Recruitment and Retention
- Building on existing infrastructure to support capacity and sustainability
- Strategic goal is to expand research in military primary care



Practice Based Research Network



LTC Jeff Yarvis, Ph.D., MSW, M.Ed. Assistant Professor
(301) 295-9853 jyarvis@usuhs.mil

Family Medicine
Uniformed Services University of The Health Sciences